

The Planning Network



What You Should Know About Housing

By Dana Lilley, Supervising Planner

You already know that housing is expensive here. Not enough housing is available in price ranges that are affordable for people who work, attend school or retire here. The County's price ceiling in September for a 3-bedroom home considered affordable to a moderate income household was \$261,131, but few homes are listed below that price. Housing is expensive in most of California, not just here in SLO County, as can be seen in the table below.

Area	Median Price July 2006	Median Price June 2006	Change from prior month	Median Price July 2005	Change from prior year
San Luis Obispo Co.	\$574,560	\$620,540	-7.4%	\$559,900	+2.6%
Santa Barbara County	\$636,900	\$778,850	-18.2%	\$654,170	-2.6%
Monterey County	\$659,000	\$687,500	-4.1%	\$698,000	-5.6%
Central Valley	\$353,890	\$362,960	-2.5%	\$356,260	-0.7%
Sacramento	\$378,590	\$384,240	-1.5%	\$387,810	-2.4%

Source: California Association of Realtors

Why isn't more housing available to meet the demand?

Few people think that local governments should simply remove limits to growth in order to facilitate enough new housing to bring home prices down. The impacts to limited water supplies, traffic congestion, agricultural land use, community character, and environmental protection are too great. Bottom line: More housing would be available if there was more public support for it.

What is the County doing to address housing needs?

The County is implementing programs of its Housing Element to designate more residential land, finance affordable housing, preserve existing apartments or mobilehome parks, revise development standards to allow more housing, and require provision of affordable housing (also known as "inclusionary housing"). Anytime such sweeping rule changes are implemented by local governments, the potential for unintended consequences is great, so the County chose to proceed carefully,



researching options, consulting with stakeholders, publishing "concept papers," and holding public workshops and study sessions before starting formal hearings by the Planning Commission. The County began implementing these programs soon after the updated

Housing Element was adopted on July 20, 2004, as described below:

- Concept paper issued regarding inclusionary housing and resale controls: May 2005
- Concept papers issued regarding designating land for housing, rules for conversions of apartments to condominiums, rules for conversion or closure of mobile-

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The Planning and Building Department's Mission Statement:

Promoting the Wise Use of Land

Helping to Build Great Communities

We're on the web!
WWW.SLOPLANNING.ORG

Meet the Staff—Rob Davidson

Every quarter, a different staff member will be featured.



I was born and raised in Santa Monica, where in my teens I discovered surfing. Being a product of the sixties, I was able to hitch hike around the area and once, found myself on the Sunset Strip where we snuck into the Whiskey-A-Go-Go to see the Doors. Couldn't do any of that now-a-days.

Even with all that fun, I still managed to graduate from Santa Monica High School in 1973, where I majored in art history. I then attended Santa Monica City College and earned an AA degree in architecture/construction technology while kicking around town doing construction work, house painting and of course, some serious surfing.

After graduation, I moved to the Tahoe area where I drew plans and constructed spec houses. I replaced my surfing with snow skiing. Eventually, I made my way back to Santa Monica and got a job with the City of Santa Monica's Carpenter Shop where I built cabinets, remodeled offices, maintained public buildings (and got back into surfing!).

I quit working for the city and went to work with a local contractor who built homes in the Pacific Palisades/Malibu area. The most important part of this job was that I could surf more.

I found my calling (other than surfing) when I got a job as a building inspector with the City of Hermosa Beach where I met my future wife who was (and still is) a planner. I left Hermosa Beach and went to work for the City of Santa Monica, this time as a Senior Building Inspector. Problem with this job - not enough surfing. To solve this serious surfing issue, I moved to the Central Coast with my wife and three kids and became **THE** Building Department for the City of Grover Beach; however, there was no surf.

I have been working for the County for the past seven years as a Building Inspector III where I intend to stay until all of my kids graduate high school, which will make me a very old man when I retire. I hold title as one of the Official SLOCEA Shop Stewards. My three kids (ages 13, 11, and 5) keep us very busy with soccer, baseball, dance classes, etc., but we would not have it any other way.

Charles Riha, Plans Examiner III



Department Promotions

Congratulations to each of you on your promotion. Employees can receive a promotion through the County's 5.05 Career Series program. To be eligible, your position must be part of a job class series, and you must meet the minimum qualifications. The employee or their supervisor prepares documentation that the employee is performing the higher-level duties and responsibilities of the new class. Upon acceptance from the Department Career Board and approval from the Department Head, a promotion is initiated.

Morgan Torell, Planner II



Housing & Economic Development

(Do you know who we are?)

Do you know us? The Housing and Economic Development Section includes four (soon to be five) planners and two accountants, as described below:

Supervising Planner, **Dana Lilley** really enjoys spending millions of dollars each year on projects that benefit county residents. He interfaces with a variety of officials and organizations about affordable housing and grants, prepares his section's budget, and works directly to implement housing and economic programs. Currently his biggest challenge: finding better ways to finance major infrastructure projects.

Ted Bench, Planner III, updates and implements the County's affordable housing ordinances on retaining existing affordable housing and requiring new affordable housing. Ted also administers Federal HOME and/or CDBG funds for new affordable housing, the First Time Homebuyer Program, Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program, and more. Currently his biggest challenge: obtaining approval of a new ordinance affecting proposals to close or convert existing mobilehome parks.

Tony Navarro, Planner III, is responsible for securing Federal approval of funding plans for several annual grants for affordable housing, public facilities, and business assistance activities. He assists five cities in administering their CDBG funds. He also prepares reports to HUD, conducts Federal environmental reviews, holds workshops, and presents staff reports at hearings.

Morgan Torell, Planner II, implements Housing Element programs and assists with Federal grants. She researches affordable housing and land information,

completes environmental review for grant projects, and works on other general activities related to grant administration and housing activities.

Soutsida Burgos, Accountant I, tracks State, Federal, and local funds that are passed through to many agencies implementing housing or community development activities. She completes quarterly and annual financial reports for HUD and monitors grant recipients to ensure compliance with HUD regulations.

Nancy Robinson, Accounting Technician, processes payments for all HUD grant programs and HUD loans. She processed \$4,980,166 in grant funds in the 05/06 fiscal year and tracks 120 active loans for the First Time Homebuyer Program, housing rehabilitation loans, and gap financing loans.



Dana Lilley, Ted Bench, Soutsida Burgos, Morgan Torell, Nancy Robinson and Tony Navarro

HOUSING: continued from Page 1...

- home parks, and revisions to development standards: Oct. 2005
- Public workshops (4) regarding the topics of the concept papers: Oct/Nov 2005
- Concept paper issued regarding minimum density in selected Residential Multi-Family sites: March 2006
- Planning Commission study session on proposed rules for mobilehome parks and condominium conversions: April 27, 2006
- Planning Commission study session on affordable housing resale controls: May 11, 2006
- Planning Commission hearings on proposed ordinances:
 - Mobilehome park conversions: June 22, 2006; Aug 10, 2006; Nov 9, 2006
 - Condominium conversions: June 22, 2006; July 13, 2006; Sept 28, 2006
 - Secondary dwellings: July 13, 2006
 - Affordable housing resale controls: August 10, 2006; September 14, 2006
- Public review draft Environmental Impact Report on inclusionary housing, revised development standards and minimum multi-family density: December 2006 (hearings to start in Spring 2007)

By the way, the County has just reactivated its First-Time Home Buyer Program. Only \$683,322 is set aside for this program, so it will go fast. The Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo (HASLO) is implementing the program on behalf of the County. Call HASLO for more information.



Did you know...

We redesigned our website recently:

- Our website is "hit" over 600 times per day
- Staff Contact information is viewed more than any other page
- Our most popular download, The Land Use Ordinance (Title 22), has been downloaded over 300 times since August 15, 2006
- You can obtain 10 different types of permits on our website (without ever having to come in to our office!)

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Trial~~s~~ and Tribulation~~s~~ of a Red Legged Frog By Julie Eliason

Did you know that the "Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" made famous by the writer Mark Twain, is thought to be the one and only California red-legged frog (RLF) found here on the Central Coast? The RLF, or *Rana aurora draytonii*, as it is known in the scientific circle, can be found in many coastal and inland creeks, wetlands, stock ponds, and coastal estuaries. However, they are elusive and not readily observed. RLFs are most active at night and they prefer habitats with deep pools (greater than three feet) and dense vegetation where they can hide from predators. They are also rather quiet and do not croak loudly like the introduced bullfrog or their tiny cousin the tree frog.

The life of a RLF is not an easy one. Everyday, it must evade predators such as egrets, owls, hawks, and raccoons. RLF eggs and tadpoles also make good meals for fish and other aquatic organisms. Unfortunately, humans once harvested about 80,000 frogs annually in San Francisco and the Central Valley in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Bullfrogs were introduced in California around 1896 to help satisfy the culinary demand for frog legs, but this backfired at the RLF's expense when the larger bullfrogs began to prey on the smaller RLF.

During winter months, RLFs must face raging creek waters. They bury themselves in leaf litter high on the banks to escape the flood waters. Summer time poses

other problems for the frog when creeks dry up and deep pools disappear. Luckily, RLFs can move relatively long distances across forests and pastures to other sources of water.

RLF's were once numerous throughout California, but their numbers have declined due to loss of more than 90 percent of their habitat from conversion of wetlands and

riparian areas to agricultural land. Other sources of their population decline include habitat fragmentation, stream channelization, water diversion, and eating and trampling of aquatic vegetation from cattle grazing. In addition, the quality of RLF's habitat has degraded due to siltation from erosion and sediment run-off, pesticide use, and introduction of exotic predators such as the bullfrog and nonnative fish. The California populations declined to such an extent

that in 1996, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed them as being threatened.

So what good are RLF's? Like all living organisms, they are an important integral component of the ecosystem and serve both as predators and prey for other organisms. In addition, some biologists believe that amphibians are good indicators of the state of the environment because of their sensitivity to environmental changes. Therefore, it is important to monitor amphibian populations to detect changes in the environment that could eventually have a negative impact on the human population.

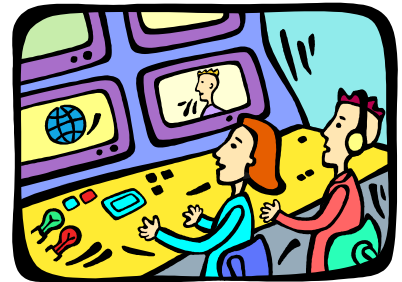


HAIL GRANICUS! By Ramona Hedges

What is Granicus? Granicus is our new media management software. Granicus enables us to webcast and provide public access to research any future or past Planning Commission, Subdivision Review Board, and Airport Land Use Commission meetings' content. You won't see Granicus working, but the links described below provide direction to the information about the Planning and Building department meetings you are interested in.

Simply go to our Planning homepage at www.sloplanning.org. From the Planning home page you will see "Quicklinks" on the right-hand side of your screen. Under Quicklinks, select "Meeting Video, Agendas & Minutes". Once there, select your desired hearing board and date. You can now view archived or live streaming video of meetings alongside the recorded minutes for each meeting.

The Records Management unit of Planning & Building is proud to be able to provide the public with this access anytime and from anywhere. Hail Granicus!



During a Disaster – We are Disaster Service Workers By John Hofschroer

The Department of Planning and Building provides daily services which contribute to the high quality of living enjoyed in our County. But did you know that all County employees are designated “Disaster Service Workers”? Our services are never more essential than in times of extreme emergency or disaster. These days we can hardly open a newspaper without learning of another disaster somewhere in the world. And we’ve had our share of emergencies such as floods, wild land fires and earthquakes.

Helping out during and after a disaster is not new for our department. After the 1994 Northridge earthquake, several of our building inspectors volunteered and helped out with the massive job of assessing which buildings in this metropolitan area were safe to occupy. After our 2003 San Simeon earthquake, nerves were rattled and hundreds of buildings were left damaged. Quick work by building inspectors helped assure that buildings were safe to occupy again. We were even ready to help out in the 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster by sending a volunteer to New Orleans.

The County takes emergency preparedness very seriously. With our own Office of Emergency Services and Risk Management Department, a lot of work happens behind the scenes. The potential for earthquakes, fires, floods, accidents with hazardous materials, and an accident at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant are concerns facing local public service agencies. Currently, several department staff serve on an emergency response

team which, among other tasks, trains regularly at coordinating an evacuation in case of an accident at the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

The County’s Emergency Plan relies heavily upon County employees as a valuable resource. The Plan is aimed at minimizing the effects of disasters by utilizing resources including public employees, private business people, private public service agencies, and other volunteers. Together, these people form an organized group of disaster workers. For more information, refer to the Department Safety Manual, or go to:

www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/divisions/riskmanage



John Hofschroer and Irina Starodubzew, Safety Officers

TIPS FROM THE INSPECTORS

On-Line Inspection Scheduling - Visit our website at <http://www.sloplanning.org>, then select “E-Permits and On-Line Inspections” from the “Quicklinks” list on the right side of the screen. Or, you can go directly to the On-Line Inspection Scheduling page at <http://www.sloplanning.org/inspections/>. You’ll need to know your permit number and the type of inspection you want to schedule (you can choose the inspection type from a list).

To find out the approximate time of your inspection, you may call your building inspector between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. the day it is scheduled. When possible, your inspector will try to accommodate your request for a morning or afternoon inspection. If the road or driveway to your building site is gated, be sure to leave the gate unlocked the day an inspection is scheduled.

Certifying Building Setbacks

There has been a recent change in County procedure concerning the assurance of required setbacks of structures from property lines. As of August 1, 2006, structures located 5 feet or less from the minimum setback must be certified by a civil engineer or land surveyor as meeting the setback requirement. This is inexpensive insurance that costly construction will not require even more costly modifications to meet the setback standards.

To minimize delays to the construction schedule, arrange to have an original (not a copy) certification letter stamped, dated and signed by the licensed civil engineer or land surveyor available for the inspector at the foundation/setback inspection. If the certification letter is not available and everything else is correct, we will leave a correction notice noting the forms and reinforcement conform to the approved plans and we will have to wait for the letter before we are able to approve the foundations.

Priority Processing for Smart Growth Projects

By Chuck Stevenson, AICP, Division Manager

Good news for “Smart Growth” development projects! The County Planning Department has initiated priority processing for land development or subdivisions that include features attributed to Smart Growth principles. Projects that score a certain amount of points on a checklist of criteria could qualify for quicker review by planning and other agency staff and save months in processing time of their application. (To view or download a copy of the checklist, go to www.sloplanning.org).

What exactly are Smart Growth projects?

First of all, Smart Growth Principles encourage development within urban areas that makes more efficient use of land and resources than traditional development might. This type of development is often referred to as compact urban form. Projects that qualify might include commercial uses sharing the same building or site with residential units, or residential developments that have smaller lots and homes while providing usable common open areas and pedestrian connections to neighborhood shopping or public transportation. Projects that

qualify for expedited processing will not receive less scrutiny for compliance with land use or environmental regulations. It is important to remember, however, that parts of the permit review process can be affected and may be out of the planner’s control such as noticing requirements or the ability of applicants to respond quickly to a request for additional information.

As community leaders and decision-makers look for ways to address the many challenges facing our towns, it is hoped that this new tool will encourage development that brings more housing choices to a broader range of people, more economic vitality to downtown areas, more choices in modes of transportation, and more efficient use of tax dollars to operate and maintain infrastructure systems.

If you have questions or would like to have your proposed project reviewed for possible priority processing, please contact Martha Neder at 781-4576, or Chuck Stevenson at 781-5197.

The Workforce Housing Coalition of San Luis Obispo County

Synopsis of a discussion with Jerry Rioux, SLOWHC member

YIMBY is an acronym for *Yes In My Back Yard* in contrast and opposition to the NIMBY phenomenon. (Wikipedia definition)

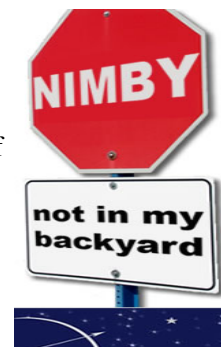
On May 31, 2003, a group of volunteers conducted a tour of good examples of affordable housing throughout the county in an effort to build public awareness that well-designed, higher density housing can be an asset for communities by looking attractive while providing affordable housing to locally-employed people.

Soon after the tour, this group formed the Workforce Housing Coalition of San Luis Obispo County (SLOWHC), an affordable housing advocacy (or YIMBY) group. The SLOWHC strives to maintain broad membership, including home building, lending, realtor, nonprofit, environmental and governmental groups.

The SLOWHC supports affordable housing through research, public education and advocacy of policies favorable to affordable housing and new housing developments that meet its criteria of affordability and design. The goal of the SLOWHC is to promote housing affordable to households earning less than 160 percent of median income. Generally, well-designed and located housing affordable to households earning less than \$100,000 per year would meet the criteria. The coalition writes letters of support, and its members attend hearings on projects meeting the criteria.

Other than the 2003 housing tour, the coalition has organized educational events including workshops on higher density housing, earthquake retrofitting and most recently, the Housing Education Fair (September 16, 2006).

Want to know more? Check out the SLOWHC Web site: <http://www.slowhc.org/>.



Rideshare Week October 16-20

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getting you
down?*

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GAS	
DRIVE ALONE	3.20
2 PERSON CARPOOL	1.60
4 PERSON CARPOOL	.80
VANPOOL	.26
TRANSIT	.13
Price Per Gallon Per Passenger	

Photo Courtesy: Bob Ransom

SLO Regional Rideshare is making it easy to **Get Creative With Your Commute** during Rideshare Week.

During Rideshare Week, every person who pledges to take the bus, carpool, vanpool, bike, walk or work from home will be entered into a drawing to win a **TRIP AROUND THE WORLD**.

As a finale to Rideshare Week, a **Creative Commute Connection** will take place on Thursday, October 19th at SLO Farmers' Market on Morro Street. This major attraction will provide individuals the opportunity to receive personalized, car free advice, learn how to load a bike on and off of the bus, find out how to fix a flat bike tire, view the winning vanpool art display and experience just how easy it is to get creative with commuting.

To find more information or to get your pledge sheet go to:

www.rideshare.org/rideshareweek

or call 781-4362 for more information.



OPEN HOUSE



The Department hosted an open house on September 7th that was attended by approximately 75 of our best customers. It was a smashing success! There was a waiting line at 5 PM to dash in to be the first to receive one of the free CDs of the Land Use Ordinance. County staff welcomed property owners, developers, architects, engineers, and county residents at the Permit Center. County staff provided planning and building related information and answered many questions about the permit process. "We demonstrated many of our new programs including the new automated on-line E-PERMITs system that allows the public to request a minor remodel permit from the comfort of their home," said Cheryl Journey, San Luis Obispo County's Chief Building Official.

Secondary Dwelling Design Competition

The County Department of Planning and Building is holding an architectural design competition for secondary dwellings in early 2007. An exact start date will be announced in November 2006. Architects from the area will be invited to participate in the competition. The competition will result in a number of house plans for secondary dwellings and will be available to qualifying public at no charge. A secondary dwelling is a small home located on the same site as a primary residence. Secondary dwellings provide one form of very needed affordable housing. While the County's secondary housing ordinance has been in operation for years, more can be done to build secondary dwellings in unincorporated areas especially where jobs, shopping and schools are nearby. People wanting to use the plans free of charge must construct the secondary dwelling on property in the unincorporated areas of the County.

The size of homes that will be considered for the design competition will be limited to 800 square feet in area (smaller are encouraged). Use of stock plans will eliminate the usual plan check time and save on architectural, engineering and energy analysis costs. For more information, please contact Morgan Torell at (805) 781-5113, mtorell@co.slo.ca.us or Chuck Stevenson at (805) 781-5197, cstevenson@co.slo.ca.us

An Interactive Event

Mark your calendar for the upcoming Conservation Element Update Event, **October 5, 2006 from 7:00 – 9:30 PM** in the Library Community Room, 995 Palm St, SLO.

Join us for this important interactive evening to register your views on resource conservation in the County.

For more information, contact James Caruso at 781-5702, jcaruso@co.slo.ca.us

Planning and Building
County Gov. Center
San Luis Obispo, CA
93408

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(805) 781-5600

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Upcoming Events...

Oct. 5th	Conservation Element Update — City/County Library
Oct. 10th	Smart Energy Solutions Forum—SLO Vets Hall
Oct. 16th	Rideshare Week
Oct. 22nd	APA Conference — Orange County
Nov. 3 & 4	California Valley Clean Up

Newsletter brought
to you by the
Communications
Team of the
Department of
Planning and
Building

Please submit ideas for
the next issue to
Jennifer Jimenez
jjimenez@co.slo.ca.us

*If you prefer to
receive this newsletter
by e-mail, send a
message to
Planningnetwork
@co.slo.ca.us with
“newsletter” in the
subject line.*

Planning Commission Dates Have Changed

October 12, 2006 - Beginning
at 8:45 a.m.
October 19, 2006 - Beginning
at 1:00 p.m.
October 26, 2006 - NO MEET-
ING
November 9, 2006 - Begin-
ning at 8:45 a.m.
November 23, 2006 - NO
MEETING
November 30, 2006 - Begin-
ning at 8:45 a.m.
December 14, 2006 - Begin-
ning at 8:45 a.m.

Meet the New Staff!

Jill Bennett

In May 2005, I moved here from the Central Valley and bought a business, "The Scoop" Ice Cream Parlor in Pismo Beach. I started working for SLO Drug and Alcohol Services in January 2006 and transferred to Code Enforcement in July. I have work experience in both law enforcement and code enforcement. I have two children: son DJ, 16 years old and daughter Brooke, 14 years old. Both of my children play high school sports, so when I am not working, I am busy attending sporting events.



Dan Nemechek



Dan is our recent addition to the Coastal Planning and Permitting Team. As a California native and a Cal Poly Alumnus, he is very pleased to be living and working again in SLO County. Dan and his wife recently relocated from Santa Barbara, where he was employed as a lead planner in Development Review for 3 1/2 years with the County of Santa Barbara. Dan adds, "I am a strong advocate of mentoring and professional development within the planning profession and am passionate about public service. I look forward to meeting and working with you in the days to come."

Bobby Jo Close

Bobby Jo lives in Atascadero with her husband, Philip. Prior to coming to the County, Bobby Jo worked for the California Conservation Corps (CCC). At the CCC she worked with young adults, teaching them field data collection techniques using mapping grade GPS and mapping skills using GIS. About three years ago BobbyJo moved on from the State to become a private consultant and to go back to school full-time. As a consultant she specialized in wetland assessment protocol development, rare species mapping, and stream and vegetation field surveys.



2007 CDBG, HOME, and ESG GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications will be accepted until the close of business October 30, 2006. Hard copies of the original application must be PHYSICALLY received by 5:00 P.M. To obtain an application, go to the following website: www.sloplanning.org. Questions may be directed to Tony Navarro, Planner III, (805) 781-5787. Applications can be mailed to: Tony Navarro, Planner III, Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, Room 300, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408 or hand delivered to Tony Navarro at 1050 Monterey Street, Room 370, San Luis Obispo, CA, faxed to (805) 781-5624, or E-mailed to tnavarro@co.slo.ca.us